# THE BUDDHIST REVIEW.

Edited by ANANDA METTEYYA.

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The Editor of the Buddhist Review will be grateful for any articles, letters, cuttings, notes or other literary contributions on the subject of Buddhism, especially from friends in the East. It is to be understood, however, that the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland is not responsible for, nor does the Editor necessarily endorse, the individual opinions or statements made by contributors. All MSS. should be typewritten if possible.

## The Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland

Has for its objects the extension of the knowledge of the tenets of Buddhism, and the promotion of the study of Pali, a language allied to Sanskrit, in which the original Buddhist Scriptures are written. The Society publishes *The Buddhist Review*, and issues works on Buddhism.

Membership of the Society does not imply that the holder is a Buddhist, but that he or she is interested in some branch of the Society's work.

The Annual Subscription is One Guinea (Fellows), or Ten Shillings and Sixpence (Associates), payable in advance at any date. Donations will be gratefully accepted.

Meetings are now being held each Sunday at 6.30 p.m. at the Emerson Club, 19, Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C. Friends are invited to take part in these meetings, which are open to all, and to help by delivering lectures or sending papers to be read. Contributors should, if possible, submit their papers to the Secretaries at least one week in advance.

**Applications for Specimen Copies of this Review will be considered.**

## To our Readers.

In taking over, from the able hands of Mr. D. B. Jayatilaka of Ceylon, the Editorship of *The Buddhist Review*, we have thought that it might prove of interest to its Readers, both here and in the East, to give a brief statement describing the present position of our movement; together with some indication of our aims, hopes and plans for the future.

The five dark and terrible years of the Great War formed, of hard necessity, an epoch by themselves;—a period during which all ethical, philosophical, intellectual and religious movements, our own of course no less than others, were well-nigh submerged under the ever-rising flood of *Avijjā*—of mental darkness and inertia resultant from the clamant demands of the needs of the moment, and all the burdens and sorrows of each individual life.

But, as the Great Teacher well declared, it is in the very nature of all component things that they should be subject to continued change; ever the Wheel turns on and ever all those bound to it are passing from good conditionings to ill, from ill to good. So it is that the present period presents an opportunity for the furtherance of our aims greater than has hitherto been possible. With the ending of the period of materialistic mental action necessitated by the war, the collective mind of the West-European peoples has undergone a very natural and indeed inevitable reaction towards the deeper things of life, the greater concerns erst hidden by the thickening of Illusion's veil. Already, on every hand, we see this tendency in operation; and we write these present lines mainly with the object of impressing upon our Buddhist Readers, more particularly in the East, that *no period could possibly be more propitious to the fulfilment of our aims than that upon which we now have entered.*

For the reasons aboye referred to, our movement, during the war, entered upon a phase of ever-diminishing activity. The weekly meetings at the old Heaquarters at Earl's Court steadily lessened in numbers, till at times there was no audience at all; lecturers, knowing anything worth hearing of the subjects involved, were all but unprocurable, whilst those obtained by the earnest efforts of our Hon. Secretary not unseldom found themselves faced by an audience of but two or three persons; and so, naturally, did not care to come and lecture again. In the same way the growing cost of printing

and paper, reduced financial means and other difficulties compelled the Council to reduce the size and style of this Review to its recent proportions, and further difficulties resulted in the very long periods which have elapsed between the appearance of each successive issue.

One observation we consider due before we pass on from this brief *resume* of the recent conditions of our movement:—that, namely, the very greatest credit is due to our Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. F. E. Balls, for the earnestness and devotion with which he, practically alone and unaided, has carried on the official work during the whole of this dark period; has kept going the weekly meetings and without a break has presided or been present thereat. It is not too much to say that it is due solely to his ungrudging and continuous work that the Society remains alive; ready to enter, as we now hope and believe it is about to do, upon a new period of vastly increased effort and usefulness.

During the war, a contract was entered into with our present printers for the production of six issues of the *Review* in the greatly reduced size in which it has recently appeared. The present issue consists of the last two such numbers put together: and we hope and expect to be able to return, in future issues, to the old size and style of the *Review*. Further, we hope to be able to make certain arrangements which will ensure the regular appearance of the *Review* at intervals of three months only; such that it shall no longer be dependant upon our own very uncertain health, a cause responsible for several months at least out of the six since the last number was sent out.

About the middle of last year, the Society's lease of the old Headquarters at Earl's Court expired; and the weekly meetings (every Sunday at 7.15 p.m.) are temporarily being held at the rooms of the Emerson Club, 19, Buckingham Street, Strand, which also is the postal address for letters relating to the Society's work, business, and for matters connected with this *Review*. We have for some time been trying to purchase a piece of land of our own, in some suitable suburban part of London, whereon we can, when our resources permit, build a Headquarters more adequate to the importance of our work; from which, as from a centre, our movement can spread forth, and where our public weekly meetings, as well as Council and other business conferences may be held.

Dr. W. M. McGovern, an English Buddhist who has lived some time in Japan, and who during his residence in that country was ordained as a Buddhist Priest, both in the Zen and Shin-shu sects; who is now a Member of our Council, and has favoured us with several very eloquent and interesting lectures, has suggested that the Society should issue a series of small books, each dealing with a separate phase of Buddhist thought. This suggestion we hope ere long to be in a position to carry out,—such a series, apart from its general usefulness in extending the knowledge of Buddhism, would have the further advantage, as being published under the auspices of the Society, of making our existence and work better known. Another new departure, prompted by the success of our large public meetings in celebration of Buddha-Day, has been made in the direction of holding open meetings, at some public hall, whereat, in place of the single lecture, followed by a debate, which (with a reading from some portion of the *Pitakas*), constitutes our ordinary weekly meetings, several speakers have addressed the audience on as many different aspects of Buddhist teaching, thought and life. The first of this new series of meeting was held at Caxton Hall, on November 12th, last year, with Dr. W. A. De Silva, the eminent Sinhalese Buddhist (now the President of the Society) in the chair. The several addresses then delivered will be found reproduced in full in the following pages.

It has also been proposed that our Society should assist in the promotion of a hostel for oriental, and of course particularly Buddhist seamen; at some suitable locality in the neighbourhood of the London Docks, where the many Buddhist seamen employed on ships which call at London could find a decent home and appropriate food at cost price; in place of being compelled to utilise either Christian missionary homes, where of course the object is to endeavour to tamper with their religion, or the common lodging-houses for such sailors, the grave disadvantages of which are only too well known.

Most of all, however, do we desire to see the establishment in some suitable part of this country of a properly-endowed Buddhist monastery, where a duly-constituted chapter of *Bhikkhus* can live and teach, and write that *Buddhist* Buddhist literature of which we are so greatly in need. In these days and in these western lands it is *books* which most powerfully influence thought; and, as our readers are well aware, though there is in existence a vast amount of nominally Buddhist literature, the greater part of it by far has been

written by non-Buddhists, much of it by missionary writers whose definite object was of course to represent the Buddhist teachings in as unfavourable a light as they possibly could. The noble and self-denying labours of the little band of Pali scholars, with Dr. and Mrs. Rhys Davids at their head, have done much, indeed, in making known to the western world the Treasure of the Dhamma through their invaluable translations from the Pitakas and Commentaries. Much, however, even in this direction of producing translations from the Pali, remains to be done, and the most fitting home for this great work would be an English Buddhist monastery.

Most of our oriental readers will be aware that it was chiefly with the object of eventually forming such a Sangha in the West that the present writer entered the Order; and, with the aid of his supporters, founded the *Buddhasasana Samagama* in Burma and Ceylon. Increasing ill-health, accentuated by the difficult conditions of the life of a Bhikkhu in tropical lands, rendered his personal participation in that plan impossible. But it still remains our very firm conviction that, without such a Sangha as its nucleus, the Buddhist movement in the West can accomplish but little. Wherever Buddhism has spread, it has done so by virtue of the exemplary lives of its Monks, no less than by their teaching of the Dhamma; and so, we are convinced, will it be in England at this day. Without that "Incomparable Field for the Sowing of Merit" in its midst, but little can be done to bring home to the West the immense value that for it, no less than for the East, lies in the Teaching of the Buddha. With it to offer an example of how nobly life can be lived; with it to serve as a focal centre from which the spiritual forces of the Sasana can radiate forth, *more could be accomplished, at this epoch in particular, than the majority of men would deem possible.*

But to carry out these plans, to place this Review on a sound basis, to extend our large-scale public meetings, and to promote, in these days of costly printing and paper, the publication of a sound and reliable Buddhist literature, to say nothing of the larger matters adumbrated, demands an expenditure, both in time and in money, very far in advance of that which we have so far received.

For such assistance to our movement then, we very earnestly appeal to all our Buddhist Readers, whether in the East or in the West. To our brothers in the East we say:—You, Buddhists by birth, have received in consequence of your bye-gone devotion to the

*Sasana* the incomparable privelege of instruction in this great Wisdom from your childhood's days. That privelege you owe to the compassionate charity, firstly, of the Great Teacher Himself, and secondly to the devoted labours of the great Buddhist missionaries of old. That Teaching, that Wisdom, is like Flame, like a Light; in that it can be communicated from one lamp to another, and yet another in unending sequence, while still the flame that gives is undiminished by its giving;—rather, indeed, does it grow ever greater thereby, since the fire and light of it flames, too, in all those other lamps. It is like Life; that, prisoned in the Lotus-seed, can seize upon these dead-seeming elements of earth and air and water; can fashion their dull substance into its own being; and, out of the black mire, the water and the air can bring forth in the day-time of its blossoming such beauty as can stir the heart even of the dullest-witted of mankind. Those of you who have, even in the least degree, grasped somewhat of its meaning, will know that in it lies incomparably the most precious thing that you possess; the greatest treasure, even, of mankind at large.

Remembering, then, and emulating as best you can the charity of those of old to whose great lives you owe this Treasure of the Law, we ask you, now that the conditions are so ripe for it, that you should help us in our effort to enlarge its empire. Each one of you, doubtless, cherishes as his heart's dearest wish that in his future lives, also, he should enjoy this highest privelege of instruction in the Truth even from his childhood's days; and, understanding how it is in the very nature of Kamma to produce effects in character resembling the generating causes, you will readily perceive that, in this movement to make Buddhism better known in the West, lies your great opportunity for realising that high aspiration.

And to those of our colleagues in the West who, like ourselves, consider that in thus making more generally known to our fellows this incomparable wisdom of the old East lies the noblest work to which a man can devote his energies, we also appeal for help; here, mainly, for direct assistance in the organising of our movement. For years, as has been said, the carrying-on of the laborious and tedious work involved in such a movement has rested upon the sole shoulders of our Hon. Secretary; and in less degree on the former editors of this *Review*. But now that the changed conditions present so favourable an opportunity for the extension of our movement it is no longer proper that so great a task should rest upon the

efforts of one devoted worker, who, unhappily, has but little leisure in which to work for us; or, in the matter of this *Review* and other departments of our activities, on one who, like the present writer, is frequently incapacitated by ill-health for weeks together. We therefore invite any of our Readers in London who are willing to devote their services to this work to communicate with the Hon. Sec. at 19, Buckingham Street, Strand, W.C.

With the enlarged resources which we are confident that our Buddhist-born colleagues in the East will render us in reponse to this appeal, and by means of the organisation of workers which we have in view, we shall be in a position somewhat more adequately to avail ourselves of the immense opportunity that present conditions afford.

From another point of view also it is clear that there exists in the western world itself the direst need for the stabilising influence of those ideas which we collectively designate Buddhist Teaching. On every hand we find the West to be pervaded by the gravest possible mental and moral unrest; an unrest so fundamental that at times it appears not unlikely, in the event of its further growth, to threaten the dissolution, not merely of the existent social fabric, but of civilisation itself. The marvellous advance of physical science during the past century has been to a great extent unaccompanied by such parallel improvement in matters of morality and self-restraint as was essential to the preservation of stability; with the lamentable result that the tremendous forces which science has placed within our hands have found their most fertile field of application in the direction of the creation of new and most terrible means of effecting the wholesale destruction of human life. The moral result of nineteen centuries of Christianity has been so little able to restrain the greed for world-empire, and the tendency towards destructiveness that characterises mental immaturity, that we have had to undergo the miseries of this recent war; and, indeed, the discovery of the universal reign of law has cut clean across the very foundations of Christian teaching, till 'the conflict between religion and science' has become a current phrase.

All this, to our minds, indicates one thing clearly:—that, namely, our modern civilisation stands in the greatest danger of complete disruption; unless it can discover some means of parallelising, in the mental and moral spheres, the advance that has been made in the mere conquest of the forces of nature. For stability it is essential

that every advance in the conquest over nature should be accompanied by an equal advance in the conquest over *self;*—over the spirits of greed and passion and ambition, which have brought this late calamity upon our western world.

The one hope, as it appears to us, of effecting this aim, lies precisely in the direction of the extension of that highest form of human wisdom which we in the West term the Buddhist Religion. Ultimate product of the Indo-Aryan mind :— a mentality as great in its achievements in the religious sphere as ancient Greece was great in the realms of philosophy and of art ;— it alone, amongst all the great religions of the world, has never dallied with the spirit of wordly compromise. Great as its empire has been and is, it is still its proudest claim that it has never descended to persecution ; much less preached a " Holy War." Wherever it has spread, it has done so by virtue of its obvious truth, by pure persuasion of its innate rationality. We, too, are of Aryan stock, so that this greatest product of the Aryan religious mind speaks in our own mental language ; and, most important point of all, it coincides, not merely in this or that minor detail, but *fundamentally*, with the discovery that modern science has made of the universal reign of law.

Lastly, its ultimate teaching is the conquest of self in all its manifold forms; its highest virtue consists in Sympathy, in Compassion, for all that lives and therefore suffers pain. These facts, we consider, justify us in our conclusion that in the extension of this great Teaching lies not only the solution of the ever-growing religious problems of the West ; but even, perhaps, the only possible deliverance of the western civilisation from that condition of fundamental instability which now so obviously and increasingly prevails ; and whose continued growth menaces with final dissolution all that is best and noblest in our communal life, product although it is of centuries of human aspiration and endeavour.

ANANDA M.

## Concerning "Soul."

There is one question which every thinking man sooner or later must ask himself once he begins really to think at all, and that is :— What is the real meaning of this existence of mine ? On what foundation does it rest ? Behind all that it plausibly appears to be, what is it ?

To this question there are three possible replies. First, it may be answered—and at various times and in different quarters it has been answered—that a human existence possesses no real meaning, rests upon no foundation, has nothing behind it.

That, however, is far from being a satisfying reply to the question asked.

The most obvious thing about the world we know is the way in which everything in it seems to be connected with something else. Nothing seems to stand isolated and alone. Every phenomenon, every appearance, seems to depend for its arising upon some other phenomenon or appearance which we loosely call its cause; just as in its turn itself seems to occupy the place of necessary antecedent to some other phenomenon or appearance arising after it in time, thence called its effect.

But this universally evident sequence of cause and effect this first reply to our question seems simply to flout. Apart from the recognition of the arising of the physical body through the action of an antecedent pair of such bodies, it quite ignores the causal sequence, inasmuch as it suggests nothing by way of explanation in respect of the arising of those mental, psychic qualities and characteristics of the human being which are only very partially accounted for by the facts of physical heredity. As regards these, the most typical insignia of human beings, it so cuts them off from any before or after, from the operation of the law of cause and effect so universally present in every other domain of the succession of happenings we call a world, as to be quite untenable. Such a "cut-off-view," such an *Ucchedaditthi*—as it has been so well named—in respect of the human being, must be dismissed as wholly out of keeping with all that we know in other fields of experience.

The second answer our question has received is somewhat more worthy of attention. It is also much more widely current, in one or another form being found practically all over the globe, among all kinds of people, from the most simple and primitive to the most highly cultured and civilised.

According to this view there exists in every human being an ever-unseen but yet ever-present, constant entity called variously "soul," "atta," or by some other name according to the language of the particular people holding such view; but in each language always intended to convey the idea of another being existing within the being visible to the eye, and constituting in its essence-like nature

the real identity of the visible being; persisting on, constant, lasting, ever the same, independent of whether the body perishes or not in which as in a house it is considered to have its abode.

This "lasting-on-view," this *Sassataditthi*, is at first sight a much more credible explanation of the existence of human beings than the view just considered, for at least it recognises what that other ignores, it takes into full account that continuity in the happenings of the world which we call the law of causation; the concealed, indwelling "soul" or "atta" in this view of the matter being held to be the ground of the external, visible activities and manifestations of any particular human being.

But the more we look into this theory and subject it to strict scrutiny, the more do we find that the "soul" or "atta" it posits as invisible ground of the visible human being's existence, is of the nature of an hypothesis rather than a fact. Could the veritable existence of such an entity be demonstrated with any approach to clearness, it would go far to account for the activities and appearances it is meant to explain. Unfortunately no positive evidence of the existence of such a supposed constant entity is to be found. Do what we may with it, so far as practical knowledge of its existence is concerned, it remains always an hypothesis; a brilliant hypothesis, it is true, but still an hypothesis only, not a clearly demonstrated fact. A rigorous search in other fields of knowledge open to us fails to reveal anything that might suggest an analogy or correspondence to such a supposed constant entity. Evidence of anything that might be held even remotely to resemble such a fixed, constant existence as "soul" or "atta" is conceived to possess, is very hard to find; indeed, with the best will in the world, cannot be found at all.

There was a time, in the history of Western physical science, when it was believed that some such fixed, constant existences were to be found in matter, the name atom being given to such hypothesised existences from their supposed quality of indivisibility, of it being impossible to cut them, break them up, resolve them into anything smaller or simpler. Only some seventy years ago a leading European chemist declared with a dogmatic assurance equalling that of any ecclesiastical dogmatist of them all, that an atom of hydrogen had been an atom of hydrogen from all eternity, and to all eternity would go on being an atom of hydrogen; in this pronunciamento only putting into emphatic form the general belief of his generation as to the nature and structure of the material universe.

In the view of that generation the universe of matter was made up in its entirety of just eighty or ninety different "elements," so called because they were believed to be the ultimate bricks, so to speak, out of which in various combinations was built up the house of the material universe. And these "bricks" of the "elements" always had been what they are now, each after its own kind, and throughout the future always would be so. Changes might be rung on the way in which they were combined with one another, but they themselves were the unchanging, fixed forms of atoms out of which, in considerable variety, larger bodies, molecules, might be constructed.

Then there came the discovery of Radium, an apparent "element" which yet did not at all behave as an element ought to do, but instead, before men's eyes, changed into Helium and a few other things. Its strange behaviour prompted fresh investigations into the supposed elementariness of other so-called "elements," with the result that a strong presumption was established that what is happening visibly and comparatively rapidly with Radium, is happening, if at a less perceptible and more gradual rate of progression, with them also. As Radium transmuted itself into other "elements" it was found to yield up—that is, partially dissolve into—force, among other forms of force, into the forms of force or energy we call heat and—under certain treatment—light. And the suspicion arose that perhaps, after all, Faraday's guess that the atom was nothing but a vortex of energy and not at all matter in the popular sense of a solid, substantial something, might be correct. At the present stage of investigation into these and kindred matters it is now established that there is no such thing as matter in the vulgar sense of solid substance. In the place of "solid substance" we have merely aggregations of positive and negative charges of electricity. The only constant, persisting, ever-present thing the most exact and closely scrutinising knowledge of to-day finds in the domain of matter is a constant, persisting flow of energy, of which all atoms and aggregations of atoms into molecules and so-called solid bodies, are merely the temporary, ever-changing manifestations. This constitutes a considerable difference from the old view of a solid, substantial universe, nearly everywhere current some seventy years ago; but it is the view to which modern physical science, after exact and painstaking research, has found itself forced to adhere. In all the universe, so far as our finest instruments can bring it within

observation, no trace of anything bearing the slightest resemblance to a constant, enduring substance is to be found. All forms examined are found to be inconstant, unenduring, not only in their mass, but in every least particle that goes to make up their mass. The one only thing in the universe which by any stretch of language can be called constant, is the constant flow of energy which makes, and in fact, rightly regarded, *is* the universe. In none of the findings of exact science is any support to be found for the notion of an identity in anything connected with physical phenomena; no ground whatsoever exists there for any kind of "eternity-view," any sort of *Sassataditthi*.

If we so choose, and find it more convenient in common every-day speech, we may, of course, go on calling matter solid and substantial. But under the close, accurate analysis of the physical scientist of to-day, the universe reveals itself as not a universe of matter at all, but a universe of energy. This is the result which, putting aside the superficial aspect of things and penetrating to their hidden core, the modern physicist has arrived at in his exercise of *Vibhajja*, of rigorous, relentless analysis, as applied to matter.

Even such an apparently simple thing as ordinary sense-perception, when closely analysed, furnishes no really satisfying evidence of the existence of solid substance, of constant, persisting entities. There is a common saying, "Seeing's believing!" which sententious dictum is intended by those who use it for an asseveration of their firm faith that to see anything is to be assured beyond doubt of its existence. Yet a little application of *Vibhajja*, of sharp analysis, to the workings of sense-perception is all that is required to cast very serious doubts upon the whole world of things whose existence it is popularly supposed to prove. It is the merest commonplace of physiology that nobody has ever yet seen anything! All that anybody in the world has ever seen are certain images formed upon the screen of the *camera obscura* of the eye. These images arise there through the impinging upon that screen of certain pulsations of ether. The act of seeing is thus the becoming aware of the existence of a force, the force of certain etheric vibrations. Only of the presence of energy does our eye inform us when we subject its story to strict analysis. When we perform the operation called seeing, we sense an energy, never an object. We indeed infer the existence of some object from whose surface these waves of ether are reflected, but this remains strictly an inference, nothing more. So far as our

sense of sight is concerned, we do not *know*, we cannot be certain, that an object such as we commonly assume to be present, actually is present. It is precisely upon this fact of the inability of the sense of sight to assure us of the positive presence of objects, that the greater number of optical illusionists rely for their success in amusing and mystifying their public. By means of cunning arrangements of surfaces which reflect little or no light such as black velvet curtains and screens, and others that reflect every ray of light that falls upon them such as highly polished mirrors, they are able to deceive their audience and make them believe they see what actually is not there.

Again in the exercise of the sense of hearing, it is an energy that is perceived, not anything substantial. People commonly say, for instance, "I hear a bell." But in strict truth nobody ever yet has heard a *bell* or is likely to hear a *bell*. No one has ever perceived with their ears anything but sound,—that is, waves of air striking on the tympanum of the ear and setting certain small bones rattling in the head, hence a force. What we become aware of when we "hear" anything, strictly speaking, is always an energy, never a substance, never a thing; in this case the beat of waves of air, as in the case of seeing, the pulsation or waves of ether.

"But there is the sense of touch," in alarm for their vanishing world, some may exclaim. "Surely there we have irrefragable proof of the existence of sound substance in place of your cheerless, uncomforting energy. If we lay our good solid hand against reflecting surface or sound-emitting bell and press these vigorously, do we not there get indisputable proof of the existence of substantial things?"

It would seem so and yet it is not so. Following our *Vibhajja* method of test, not even here do we find reliable proof of the existence of anything but force. You press the so-called substance, try to sink your thumb into it, and it does not yield. But why is this if not because there is a pressure back against your thumb exactly equal to that exerted by it? "Action and reaction are equal and opposite." Here in a strict analysis of what actually takes place we have only energy opposing energy. Once more, from the evidence supplied by an analysis of the data of sense-perception we find that all we have any direct, immediate experience of, is a world of force. The world of substantial things we infer to exist in correspondence with these sense-impressions is found under strict

analytic test to be just an inference, nothing more. And who is going to assure us that that inference is entirely free from error?

We see then that in the realm of physico-psychology an analysis of the elements of sense-perception leads to the same result as in that pure physics does the analysis of the so-called "elements" of matter. By the testimony of each we are informed that we are in presence of a universe of ever-flowing energies, not of anything that with any propriety can be called a universe of constant substances or entities. This being so in those two fields of investigation where we are able to make our nearest approaches to positive knowledge, we would seem to have some slight warrant for assuming that a similar state of things obtains in the field of pure psychology, in the field of consciousness—such consciousness and all thereto appertaining as goes to make up beings such as we are ourselves. Accurate investigation in this domain is ever so much more difficult than in the domain of matter; the difference in difficulty between the investigation of matter and that of mind, being exactly the difference between the eye contemplating external objects and trying to contemplate itself. But in so far as we are able to turn our powers of mental vision upon our own states of consciousness, we nowhere find anything that by any stretch of language can be called constant; we nowhere find anything but a stream of the most rapid changes—changes even more rapid in their unceasing flow than those found in the physical form.

What is the energy, the force, behind these changes? What is the energy, the force, of the presence of which these changes are the manifestation? Western science has no name for it. Western science, indeed, is only beginning to take a really serious interest in, and to devote a thorough investigation to, the subtle and multifarious phenomena of consciousness. It is only beginning to give to consciousness that same scrutinising attention which through centuries past it has bestowed so unflinchingly, so sincerely, so devotedly, to the investigation of matter, in its earnest desire to discover in that domain the truth and nothing but the truth. And so far, it has found its hands full simply in examining the bare phenomena of consciousness without making any attempt to get at the force that gives rise to the phenomena.

It is different, however, in the East. There science, for three milenniums at least, with the same determination that Western

science has shown in the investigation of matter, has applied itself to investigate and explore that realm which the West has practically left untouched; it has almost exclusively given that attention to mind and its manifestations which the West with equal exclusiveness has given almost entirely to matter and its manifestations. To the West it has left the endeavour to find out what the tree of life is by a careful counting and tabulating of each separate individual leaf upon the tree. Itself has gone direct to the investigation of trunk and roots, ignoring the whole heap of multitudinous secondary details, in assured conviction that these can quite well be deduced in the mass once that from which they spring is thoroughly well ascertained and known.

Among what we then without any impropriety might call the Orient's knowers of the mind, the greatest knower, the scientist without any peer, is One who bore by birth the name of Siddhattha Gotama, but in virtue of the brilliance of His insight, the power of penetrating intellect which He brought to bear on this domain, and the light which eventually He obtained and was able to throw upon it, by admiring millions who have recognised His great achievement, has been given the honorific title of the Buddha, that is, the Enlightened One. By this enlightened, this illumined One, illumined with the light of knowledge, the energy which manifests its presence in the manifested world as conscious beings was in His native tongue given the name of Kamma. The existence of conscious beings in all their various and varying changes and permutations was declared by this Knowing One to be merely the various and varying manifestations of Kamma-energy. As a result of His exercise of *Vibhajja*, of rigorous, ruthless analysis in the domain of mind, of His relentless scrutiny of the facts of consciousness and all connected therewith, the Buddha arrived at the exact counterpart of the conclusion come to in much later days by the scrutinising investigators of matter of the Occident. He made the momentous discovery that just as a physical object does not *have*, but *is* its shape, colour, texture and so forth, since it would puzzle any one to say what it is apart from these things; so the *Satta* or conscious being does not *have*, but *is* its Kamma or activity, since it would be very difficult to tell what it is apart from Kamma, apart from what it does. In other words, the discovery of the Buddha, when at length, after His easily understood preliminary hesitations, He decided to publish it abroad, was to the effect that in

the last, the ultimate analysis—*paramatthasaccena*, according to ultimate truth and fact, as He put it in His native speech—a sentient, conscious being is not at all a fixed, constant, substantial entity, either as a whole or in any part, by whatsoever name called, whether "soul," "atta" or what not, but at all times is merely a phase of expression of a force, the purely temporary manifestation of the force, the energy, Kamma.

Of course, for the purposes of current speech, we may, if we choose and find it more convenient, go on speaking of ourselves and our fellows as separate, discrete entities or individuals,—which latter word, it is worth noting, just means non-divisible, not capable of further division, non-cut-able, quite literally, an a-tom. But in the *Vibhajjavada*, the Analytic Doctrine, as the Buddha's teaching has so aptly been named, these beings, these entities, these so-called indivisibles or individuals reveal themselves under its relentless analysis as capable of further division, further reduction, of reduction to transitory, passing, ever-changing expressions of Kamma-energy or force. Their final, fundamental nature, apart from anything it may on the surface appear to be, is found to consist in energy, just as the final, fundamental nature of the so-called "atoms" of matter is found to consist in energy.

An illustration may help to make this matter a little clearer, taking it only as illustrating the point under consideration, and not as furnishing an exact parallel in every particular.

When a current of electricity, passing a copper wire, encounters resistance to its further passage in the shape of a filament of carbon taking the place of the copper along which it has hitherto run unimpeded, its effort to force a passage against the carbon's resistance sets the molecules of the carbon filament vibrating in a way which makes itself known to the eye as light, the light we get from an Edison-Swan incandescent lamp, for example. If for the section of carbon filament we substitute a section of any other current-resisting substance, the result under suitable conditions will be the same; there will be a manifestation of light. Or if the electric energy be conveyed by the wire to an electric heater, there it will make known its presence in the shape of heat. Or again, if it be conducted to an electric motor, it will now reveal its existence in a manifestation of motive force, and set moving machinery. Light, heat, motive force, however, at bottom will each be nothing but invisible, intangible electric energy made apprehensible to the senses of sight and touch,

the nature of the arrangement through which that energy makes known its presence being a matter of merely secondary importance.

Now suppose that a man who had never in his life before heard or seen anything connected with electricity and its uses, were suddenly to be introduced to a room full of electric lamps all shining and glowing, it is not difficult to imagine how puzzled he would be to account for the brilliant lights all round him, so different, in the absence of any apparent source of their light, from anything else he had ever seen of their kind. We can easily imagine such a man looking and peering about him, and, wondering what it could mean, utterly unable to account for the strange phenomenon of light without wick or oil or any other visible cause for it, finding himself driven to the conclusion that there must be a kind of a soul or something like that in each lamp, a soul of the nature of glowing light, by its presence in each lamp setting the lamp glowing. And if, while he was looking at the lamps, one happened to get broken, its light thereupon departing, and the mechanic in charge came along and put a new bulb in its place, as he saw the light bursting forth anew, would not our supposed man quite pardonably be inclined to say: "Ah! When that first lamp was broken the soul of light in it went away, and now it has come back into this new one, hence the light shining out again the same as before"? In such a man such a notion would be perfectly excusable. Meanwhile the electrician knows better. He knows that the current was there all the time, only waiting for a chance to reveal its presence when the appropriate conditions for doing so were furnished in the shape of a new bulb.

Even so and no otherwise is it with the psychological energy called by the Buddha, Kamma. Unseen it passes whithersoever the conditions appropriate to its visible manifestation are present, here showing itself in the subdued incandescence—so to speak—of a tiny gnat or worm; there making its presence known in the flashing coruscations, the dazzling magnificence of the arc-light, as it were, of a Deva's or archangel's existence. When one mode of its manifestation gets broken, like the lamp in the electric circuit, it merely passes on, and, where suitable circumstance offers, reveals itself afresh in another mode and form. The new light is not the same as, has no identity with, the one that lately went out, since the units of electric energy now showing their presence in its glow, are not the same as, have no identity with, those which made the glow of that other; they are not even the same as those that were making

their presence known only a moment ago in itself! And yet it is not a *totally* different light, for it is the same current of energy which made the old lamp to glow that now sets this one glowing.

In the self-same way, the new being which is the present manifestation of the stream of Kamma-energy, is not the same as, has no identity with, the previous one in its line; the aggregations that make up its composition being different from, having no identity with, those that made up the being of its predecessor. And yet it is not an *entirely* different being, since it is the same stream of Kamma-energy, though modified perchance just by having shown itself in that last manifestation—which now is making its presence known in the sense-perceptible world as the new being.

The Buddha's teaching of Kamma-energy as being the essential, the underlying fact in the existence of conscious beings, is thus seen to be the exact complement, the precise parallel of the teaching of modern physical science as to electric energy or force being the essential, underlying fact about the existence of an atom (or an electric lamp); the so-called individual or *Satta*, like the so-called atom, being nothing more than the name we find it convenient to apply to a given manifestation of energy at a given moment of time, in the one case of Kamma-energy, in the other of electric energy.

So much for the scientific, psychological presentation of the Anatta doctrine of the Buddha, that doctrine which—as the Writings tell us, and we can well believe it—seemed to its great discoverer so profound, so subtle, so difficult to grasp for ordinary, dusty-eyed mortals that almost He made up His mind to keep it to Himself rather than undertake what promised to be only the troublesome and—for all its trouble—quite fruitless labour of making it known to others. So much for the knowledge aspect of this question of "soul" or "atta," and the Kamma that causes re-birth. But what of its practical aspect? What of its significance in life as apart from mere thought?

Obviously, one who in any degree perceives the truth of this doctrine cannot well ask: What must I do to be saved? Rather his question will be: What can I do to see to it that others are not lost? How shall I behave so that the next expression of the Kamma of which I am the present expression, shall not be a suffering, a sorrow-laden, a miserable one?

And *noblesse oblige!* That nobleness which one naturally looks to find in those aiming to follow the Noble Eightfold Path (unless

that Path is misnamed), obliges, constrains them so to act that the succeeding heir of their deeds, so far as in their power lies, shall enjoy freedom from suffering, sorrow, and all untoward things. Obliged, constrained are they by that perception of the linking on of all life which is theirs, to see to it that they pour into the stream of Kamma which makes and indeed is a world, only such thoughts and words and deeds as shall conduce to the advantage, the benefit, the wellbeing of the world of beings, never such thoughts, words, or deeds, as might make for its hurt and harm.

Is this asking too much of "poor human nature"?

Some say it is. But at least we shall get more in asking too much from it than in asking too little. And this "too much"—for the nonce to call it such—is what the Great Teacher of angels and men asks. It is for those who profess to follow that Teacher, to show, each in the measure of his ability, that He does not ask in vain. Here is given a mark at which at least to aim. Here is pointed out a direction in which at least to be moving. He who aims at the stars, even if he never hits them, at least will wing his shaft higher than he who only aims at a neighbouring house top. Whoso has turned his face in the direction of the Best, how far soever he yet may be from that Best, has only to keep moving in its direction, and soon or late, if not to-day then to-morrow, some to-morrow, infallibly he will attain to it.

SILACARA.

## A Buddhist Meeting.

The popularity of the meetings, free and open to the general public, which, since its inception, our Society has held on "Buddha Day" (the full-moon day of the Indian month *Visakha*—about May—which is celebrated by Buddhists as the anniversary of the Birth, Renunciation, Attainment and Nirvana of the Teacher) induced the Council to inaugurate a series of similar meetings, each addressed by several speakers. The first of this new series of meetings was held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on November 12th, 1919; the eminent Sinhalese Buddhist, Mr. W. A. De Silva, the new President of the Society, taking the chair.

The first speaker was Mr. Francis J. Payne, well known to our readers as a former Hon. Secretary of the Society, who addressed the meeting on the *Humanity of Buddhism* as follows:—

I am glad to have been invited to-night to open this meeting with a talk on the Humanity of Buddhism, for that, I am sure, you will all agree is the most outstanding feature of this great creed. We Buddhists, those of us who have given our hearts really and truly to the sublime teaching of our great Master, never think of speaking about Him without uttering this invocation, "Honour to Him the Blessed One, the Perfect One, the Utterly Awakened," and in this spirit I invite you to approach the consideration of His life and work.

Alone among the religions of the world Buddhism takes as its very foundation the destruction of suffering and the alleviation of sorrow. Other religions teach that the spring and motive of righteousness is the will of some divine being. Some systems of thought tell us that all we need to do is to be circumspect and cunning to attempt to escape the punishment of evil deeds by knowledge and science, but the Buddha cuts clean through all these unprovable and sophistical motives, and tell us to live the holy life for the sake of the destruction of suffering.

What a glorious message is this for us here in Europe, after the pains and agonies of the most terrible war in history! The destruction of sorrow—think of it! It is the noblest and most encouraging message that our aching hearts could receive. The Buddha saw a world of strife, no different from ours. Twenty-five hundred years ago hearts were sad and tears were shed, and to-day we are still seeking for comfort and asking the way out of sorrow. That is why I so firmly believe that the Buddha, and He alone, among all the great and noble teachers of the world, is the leader to whom we in the West must turn.

He was a man; one who had suffered even as we suffer. He did not ask his disciples to imitate a god, but gently told them how to walk the path along which He had so valiantly trod, and promised that they also would reach eternal peace. Why do we love Him? Because He *lived* His teaching of infinite compassion. When, after seven long years of mental and physical struggle, He found His great truth, He exclaimed, "Happy is freedom from malice in this world; self-restraint towards all beings that have life," and when He met the five with whom He had years before meditated and tested He told them how all sorrow was the outcome of the illusion of Self; that egotism and greed were the springs of all that is evil and sorrowful. We read in Sir Edwin Arnold's beautiful poem that He rescued a swan wounded by His wicked cousin Devadatta. In another place

He comforted the weaver who had accidentally slain his son. He dried the tears of Kisagotamî and taught her that, by sharing the grief of others, a cure is found for our own. Kisagotamî, a young woman, had an only son, a baby. The plague came and took the little one's life. In her grief she came to the Master and asked Him for some medicine that would restore her boy to life. "I can give you some," the Buddha said. "Go round the village and get me a handful of mustard seed; but it must come from a house in which nobody has died." She went from house to house, and still the same tale was told—"Sister, the dead are many and the living are few." Then she came back to the Master who taught her that, in opening her heart wide enough to sorrow with the pains of every living thing, she would find the way of salvation. Again we read in those benign scriptures that He released a deer and converted the hunter. One of His disciples on another occasion had slain a young heifer for its skin, and the Master gently reproved him. Again, on one of His journeys He came to a rest house where a disciple was neglected, hungry, and filthy. "Wherefore is this?" said He to the others. "Lord," said they in reply, "this disciple has dirty habits, and we love not to attend on him." Thereupon the Buddha Himself, with His beloved disciple Ananda, washed and comforted the sick one, and uttered those words which all we who try to be His followers love to repeat —"Ye, O disciples, have no mothers and no fathers who might wait upon you! If ye wait not one upon the other, who is there indeed who will wait upon you? Whosoever would wait upon Me, he should wait upon the sick."

Those of us who know the Scriptures, and I would earnestly beg of you to throw aside all the handbooks on Buddhism and go straight to the Scriptures themselves, remember also how He "poured out such an effluence of love upon Roja the Malla" that the latter followed after Him as a calf follows after its mother. How patient in His last days was he with Chunda the smith, who had innocently given Him the putrid food which brought about His death; and how gently did He reprove Ananda, who, knowing how ill the Bhudda was, would have kept away Subhaddha, the very last who came to the Master and was not turned empty away. How gracious He was in all His teaching; large-minded and large-hearted. When the young Yasa came to him, terrified at the dangers of life, the Buddha calmed him at once—"Here is no distress, Yasa! Here is no danger! Come hither, sit down; I will teach thee the truth." That is why we love Him.

Wherever we turn in our copious Scriptures, all gospel, all about the Blessed One and His teaching, we find this universal compassion, this noble humanity springing up. Vasettha comes to Him and asks the way to union with God. The true disciple "keeps himself far from wanton destruction of seeds and plants, destruction, murder, capture, robbery, threats and violence. He has laid aside staff and sword, and lives tender-feeling, rich in mercy, friendly and kind towards all living things. He is a uniter of the divided, a strengthener of the bound. Concord rejoices him, concord is his pleasure; in concord he is well pleased, and he speaks words which bring concord, words that are blameless, pleasing to the ear, amiable; which go to the heart, are well-mannered, rejoicing everybody and welcome to all." Then when he meditates, as we all should do, no matter how busy we be and how engrossing the cares of the world may be, "he lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, Pity, Sympathy and Equanimity, and so the second, the third and the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of Love, Pity, Sympathy and Equanimity, far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure, free from all anger and ill-will."

Are we "tender-feeling, rich in mercy, friendly and kind towards all living things"? Alas, no! and we are sure that it is just because we are not so, that these late disasters have overtaken us.

"What is the Greatest Blessing"? one asks of the Buddha—"Caring for mother and father, fostering child and wife, to follow a peaceable business, giving alms, a life that is pious, helping our kinsfolk, deeds that are blameless—these are the Greatest Blessings."

"Let the Sage be truthful, free from arrogance, deceit and slander, not angry; let him overcome greed," says the Sutta Nipata; "Let the disciple be hospitable, kindly and courteous; thereof will he have great joy and make an end of suffering," echoes the Dhammapada.

Someone asks who is a noble—"He who hurts not living things, be they feeble or strong; and kills not nor causes to kill—him I call noble."

"He whose voice gives utterance to words that are kindly, instructive and true, words that give pain unto none—him I call noble."

And whom are we to consider as low-born? "He who torments living things, in whom is no pity for beings—consider him low-born."

"He who destroys or besieges village or town as a foe—consider him low-born."

"He who is rich but helps not his mother or father when old or past youth—consider him low-born."

But perhaps the very summit of utter compassion is found in the Metta Sutta which says, "As a mother, at risk of her life, watches over her only child, let him have an infinite mind for all living things; let him have love for all the world, an infinite mind, above, below, around—boundless, benevolent kindness!"

Can you hear these words and not be like as moved with pity at the sorrow of the world, and with joy that the Blessed One has shown a way of deliverance for every living thing?

China, too, where Buddhism has so many followers, has produced noble scriptures full of the humanity of Buddhism. In the Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king the Buddha is made to say—"'Tell him, I look for no reward—not even to be born in heaven, but seek instead the welfare of men, to bring back those who have gone astray, to enlighten those that live in dark and dismal error, to banish from the world all pain and sorrow . . . A noble truth I would discover; an aim unlike the common aims of men. I would bring to an end the pain that springs from life."

The Holy One of Mercy Kwan-yin says, "Never will I seek, nor receive private individual salvation—never enter into final peace alone; but for ever, and everywhere, will I live and strive for the universal redemption of every creature throughout all worlds. Until all are delivered, never will I leave this world of sin, sorrow and struggle, but will remain where I am."

In the Chinese Dhammapada we are told, "There are eleven advantages which attend the man who practises mercifulness, and is tender to all that lives. His body is always in health; he is blessed with peaceful sleep, and when engaged in study he is composed; he has no evil dreams, he is protected by Heaven, and loved by men; he is unmolested by poisonous things, and escapes the violence of war; he is unharmed by fire or water; he is successful wherever he lives, and when dead he goes to the heaven of Brahma. If a man

lives a hundred years, and engages the whole of his time and attention in religious offerings to the gods, sacrificing elephants and horses and other things, all this is not equal to one act of pure love in saving life."

Sir Edwin Arnold sums it up when he says in the person of the Buddha:—

> "I shall teach compassion unto men,
> And be a speechless world's interpreter,
> Abating this accurséd flood of woe,
> Not man's alone."

I do not apologise to you for my extensive quotation. If you want to know the magic of the Buddha, to feel "the very breath of the Master," read the Scriptures, and you will soon see why our brethren in the East cling so passionately to their ancient faith. It is well to have a teaching that emphasizes so strongly the need for humanity;—the need, I mean, for being *humane*, loving and compassionate; and if only a hundredth part of that teaching takes effect it will be sufficient to remind us how far we fall short, and how easy it is to be better and kinder than we are. There is a new spirit in the air. The kinship of man is being felt the world over. We are realizing our duty to our neighbour, and Buddhism will teach us also to realize our equally onerous duty to the animals whom we so long have despised. A wrong inflicted on the meanest thing is a wrong done to all, for all life is one. He who uses his mind and hand to cruelty becomes embodied cruelty "like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in"; he who uses his mind and hand to mercy and compassion grows into that blessed state to which we in our best moments so eagerly aspire. "Where shall charity be found? In the footprint of one bound on works of charity and faith; in the merciful spirit; in lips that dwell lovingly on that which the Great Teacher hath taught us to adore," says one of the later Ceylon books, and this is what most we need.

When once the leaven of Buddhism has entered into the mind, and conviction of its truth ensues, we cannot, we dare not, flout the things we have learned. It is ever present with us even in sleep. It shapes our conduct and directs our minds, because it asks for nought but reason and love. We cannot forget that Great Being who has done so much for us. We love Him, we adore Him, we are happy if we hear His name; we are joyed even if we see a rude

attempt to carve out His form. He is all in all and we can join with the Siamese in their beautiful invocation :—

"O Thou Eternal One,
Thou Perfection of Time,
Thou Truest Truth,
Thou Immutable Essence of all Change,
Thou Most Exalted Radiance of Mercy,
Thou Infinite Compassion,
Thou Pity, Thou Charity."

The Chairman then introduced Maung Tun Shein, a well-known and devoted Buddhist from Burma; at the time on a visit to England as a member of the Burma Deputation, who spoke on *Buddhism in the Daily Life of the Burmese People* :—

Burma is perhaps the only country in the world which has preserved the noble tenets of Buddhism almost intact, very much as it was when Buddha lived and preached two thousand five hundred years ago. Buddhism, which is the most widely followed of all the four great religions of the world, is not of native growth in Burma. India was its home, but the great wave of Buddhist influence spread toward Tibet, China, Burma, Siam, Japan and Ceylon, leaving its native home almost completely. This wave of Buddhist influence, spread during many centuries, found a very welcome soil in Burma. The historical record of the progress of Burmese civilization is almost identical with the progress of this Buddhist influence, and what we see in Burma to-day is mainly what the religion of the Buddha has done for her. The Burmese are a very democratic race; the high and the low, the rich and the poor, all mix freely amongst themselves; the women occupy a higher and freer position than in any other country in the world; the religious Brotherhood in Burma is most altruistic and self-sacrificing. It is these members of the Buddha's great Order who have made the percentage of literacy so high—four times that of India. There are in Burma no caste or class distinctions, or hatred, or secretarian rancour. The people as a whole are very charitable and hospitable, even to those who have abused their confidence. The standard of morality amongst the people is high; and last but not least they are the happiest people in the world.

To them that worship of pelf and power which is so unhappily prominent in the West to-day is a thing unknown and unheard of.

Here I might well quote what Mr. Fielding Hall, an Englishman who has studied and understood the inner life of the Burman as well as things more external has written of him: "He prefers remaining free and poor to being bound and rich. Nothing is further from him than the feeling of exclusiveness. He abominates secrecy, mystery. His religion, his women, himself, are free; there are no dark places in his life where the light cannot come. He is ready that everything should be known, that all men should be his brothers. It is not in his nature to desire wealth, it is not in his nature to keep it when it comes to him. . . With us, when we have made a little money we keep it to be a nest-egg to make more from. Not so a Burman; he will spend it. . . He will build a pagoda to the honour of the Great Teacher. . . He will build a monastery school where village lads are taught. . . . He will dig a well or build a bridge, or make a rest house. . . . He is a free man, never a slave to other men nor to himself. . . . He will never try to be a conqueror of other peoples, either with the sword, with trade, or with religion. . . . But, however that may be, in his own idea his will always be the greatest nation in the world, because it is the happiest."

These are the words of a European—an outsider in Burma—and are less likely to be prejudiced than mine, and will, I think, appeal to you better than any testimony I might personally proffer. And the agent which has contributed most towards making Burma the happiest nation in the world is Buddhism;—Buddhism which is not left in our sacred books, nor with our Religious Brotherhood only, but has been made public property and practised in the daily life of the Burmese people. It may interest you to learn how we thus practice it in our daily life. In the morning, when it is twilight, in every Buddhist house the elderly Burman rises from his sleep and, after the usual ablutions, kneels before an image of the Buddha, which one finds in almost every home, reverently kept in an elevated position in the best room, and pays respect to the Buddha; the Dhamma, the Law; the Sangha, the Brotherhood of Monks; to parents; to teachers, and all those who are senior in age, position, sanctity or authority. And then he takes his Five Precepts, or vows:—the vow not to kill; the vow not to tell a lie; the vow not to commit adultery; the vow not to steal; the vow not to take intoxicants of any kind. Then he tries to recollect as far as his memory goes the good deeds which he has done in the past, and

thereby strengthens his determination to do more good in the future; and he ends his morning religious duty by verbally as well as mentally expressing his very fervent wish that he may in the end attain *Nibbana*, the final aim of all Buddhists; and also the wish that all sentient beings whether of name (mental and spiritual qualities only), of form, or of name and form alike, may likewise be able to progress on the Path which leads towards the attainment of Nibbana. This being done, he sees that the younger members of the family, who usually rise somewhat later, follow his example and duly perform their religious duties.

Then the usual business of the family begins. The school-going children take up their books; those who do not go to school help the mother and sister to do the cooking. And the yellow-robed Monks with their black bowls go round the streets, stopping before each house that they pass; and either men or women or children—whoever happens to be free from other duties—is seen offering boiled rice and curries of different kinds, according to their means, and to each of the monks as they pass by. No one who has donned the Yellow Robe in Burma has been known to starve for want of support. A little rice from one house, a little curry from another, a fruit from yet another, and so on, gives every monk sufficient food to enable him to devote himself to his religious duties for the rest of the day.

Having done this, everyone in the family betakes himself to his or her daily work; except on the *uposatha*, or sabbath days, when they gather together at the neighbouring monasteries, where they usually observe the Eight or the Ten Precepts, whichever they prefer. These Precepts are stricter than the Five mentioned above and are very useful as a means of subjecting one's mental and moral being to proper discipline.

And when the day is over and life's multifarious duties are all done (or postponed as the case may be) religious devotions similar to those of the morning are performed by all the members of each household; and so the Burman betakes himself to rest.

What I have said just now concerns the specific religious duties which a Burman performs each day. But what about his other actions—his work in every-day life? Does religion exercise its influence over the many actions which he does each day in connection with the earning of his daily bread? Yes, it does indeed. The Five Precepts which the Burman undertakes to observe the first thing in

the morning and the last thing in the night are binding upon him. Let me now tell you in detail how these Five Precepts have controlled the every-day life of a Burman. The spirit of the vow not to kill is founded on love—not of self, not of family, not of class, not of community, not of nation or country, not even of humanity at large, but love which extends beyond, to men, to animals, to every minutest form of sentient life, nay to all living beings whatsoever. With a Burman it is wrong to kill, or to be intentionally instrumental in any way abetting the killing of any being. Thus a Buddhist cannot be a butcher, poultry farmer, or fisherman. He must earn his livelihood or direct his conduct in such a way that he commits nothing which will injure others in any way whatsoever. Thus he may not kill, he may not steal, he may not lie, he may not take any intoxicant, he may not commit adultery. And in Burma the man or woman who keeps the Five Precepts, who is guided in every action in life by these Precepts, is the rule and not the exception, and this fact is very largely responsible for the happiness which is in the heart of the people; and of which no external power can deprive them unless they themselves should fall away from this high standard of morality.

But these Five Precepts, some of you may say, do not supply the necessary force to guide a people towards the active performance of good deeds. True, but besides the Five Precepts Buddhism has given the people of Burma something else. According to some religions our life consists of two parts only—the present and the future. To us Buddhists, life consists of three phases, the past, the present, and the future. We lived in the past; we are living at present, and we shall live on into the future; until we reach at last our goal, Nibbana.

This universe is governed by the inexorable causal law known to Buddhists as the Law of Karma, which controls our entire being during the long chain of existences that have been and that are to be. We believe that good results will follow good actions and bad results will follow evil deeds. When a child is born blind, for instance, those who do not admit any past existence cannot explain his deficiency except by attributing it to the will of some spiritual Creator, who to our mind would be unjust if he thus caused the blindness of the child for no fault of its own in this life. But the Buddhist, who believes each being has already lived in many past existences, can find an explanation, saying, "The boy in one of his past existences must have done some action (although we do not

know exactly what) which justifies his blindness in this life." Scientists state that just as the law of gravitation holds good everywhere on this earth it will also hold good in any part of the universe. Similarly the Buddhist holds that just as the Law of Karma holds good in this life, it will likewise have held good in all our innumerable past existences; and will continue so to do through all our lives to come until we reach that state when we shall become unconditioned, and its operation, therefore, end. Thus we ourselves may be re-born in lower, similar or higher lives in accordance with our present actions. Further, our acts affect not ourselves only, but all the other lives around us; so that when we say, "Do good to *others*," by the word others we mean all beings whatsoever. And since the inexorable Law of Karma was there, is there, and will be there all the time, the Buddhist always has the incentive to avoid evil and to do good. It is this which has made the Burmese people so charitable and altruistic; as their pagodas, their rest houses, their roads, their bridges, their wells, their spacious monastery schools, and their religious brotherhood, numbering tens of thousands, abundantly testify.

The next speaker was Dr. William M. McGovern, an English Buddhist who has spent several years in Japan, and who, whilst in that country, was ordained as a Monk both in the Shin-Shu and Zen sects. Dr. McGovern took *Buddhism as a Philosophy* as his subject, and spoke as follows:—

Gautama, the historical Founder of Buddhism, lived in an extraordinarily interesting era. The early ardent and poetic faith of the Vedas had vanished and men were engaged in an intellectual pursuit of truth. This resulted in the formation of many widely differing creeds, theories, and conceptions of life. In this metaphysical maze there was no outstanding truth. There was and could be no criterion by which to test the validity of conflicting hypothesis. Without blind belief no consolation could be derived from them, no stimulus to the spiritual life experienced.

As a solution to this dilemma the Buddha preached His theory of enlightenment. Whether God exist or not we cannot tell. Whether the world is eternal or not must remain a question of dispute; but whatever the system of metaphysic eventually accepted, He thought that His own Four Noble Truths would forever remain true.

These, casting aside *a priori* reasoning, concerned themselves with an analysis of mental and emotional states. As at present constituted,

the spiritual aspect of man is unstable. He is a mass of conflicting emotions. He endures sorrows, he undergoes pain and passions. His life is one of illusion, of disenchantment, of awakening to the futility of things. All existence is transient; all existence is unstable, lacking any eternal discreteness. All existence is sorrowful. This was the first of the Four Noble Truths.

The Cause of Sorrow the early Buddhists found in ignorance and in desire. Cupidity, lust, passion, anger, jealousy, avarice, all these were summed up in Trishna, Desire. And knowing the sure reward of these emotions no one could be led astray by them save by the clouds of ignorance of the true causality. This was the second of the Four Noble Truths.

But though Buddhism was pessimistic in regard to the ordinary mental state of man, it held out the goal of enlightenment, of emancipation from ignorance and desire; and, consequently, from sorrow. It was a state of calm and peace, of knowledge of what the Christians would call grace. It was an amplification of experiences of great spiritual exaltation. This Nirvana, the goal of Buddhism, was the third of the Four Noble Truths.

Finally, this goal was not to be gained by metaphysical speculation, by faith in any creed or super-normal theory, but by a long training of the mind in spiritual exercises; by living a life void of extremes, by meditation, by self-control; in a word by following the noble Eightfold Path. This was the last of the Four Noble Truths.

The psychological nature of this formula must not be forgotten; for though afterwards, even in the South, Buddhism acquired a certain naive dogmatism, its foundations were purely those of realizable realities. In the shifting sands of speculation there could be no security; the ideas of the Four Truths were considered as obvious aspects of consciousness. They were, to borrow modern phraseology, not knowledge by description, but knowledge by acquaintance.

So far Mahayana, or the Buddhism of Japan, Korea, and China, and Hinayana, the Buddhism of Siam, Ceylon, and Burma, have gone hand in hand; but at this point they diverge. In Hinayana, though the ideal of love and compassion towards all was rigorously inculcated, a man's duty was summed up in saying that he must escape from the realm of passion to the realm of enlightenment,

from sorrow to peace, from the phenomena to the noumenon. It was accordingly called the Little Vehicle of salvation of those who sought Nirvana for themselves alone; for gradually there arose a school of those who, renouncing the lesser goal, set before them the ideal of the Bodhisattva, who gave up all thought of self and worked for the weal of the world, eventually attaining the rank of Buddha, the Completely Awakened One.

These called themselves followers of the Greater Vehicle (Mahayana), for whom the sorrow of the world was but a spur to renunciation of all save self-sacrifice. At the end of every Mahayana service there are chanted the words, "May the merit gained by the recitation of these holy words be used for the benefit of all sentient beings." Every applicant to the Order must vow to devote himself to promoting the weal of the world. Far from accepting emancipation from the wheel of birth and death, the Mahayanist devotee asks that he may be re-born again amongst the sorrowful and the ignorant, that he may comfort them and awaken in them the seed of wisdom. It was Santideva, one of the early Mahayana Patriarchs, who wrote in his *Bodhicaryavatara*, "I would be a protector of the unprotected; a guide of the wayfarer; a ship, a dyke, and a bridge for them who seek the Further Shore; a Lamp for them who need a lamp; a bed for those who need a bed . . . . As the earth and other elements are for the various service of the countless creatures dwelling in the whole of space, so may I in various wise support the whole sphere of life lodged in space until I be at rest . . . . So do I frame the thought of Enlightenment for the weal of the world."

The Bodhisattva ideal is not the only peculiarity of Mahayana; for in its metaphysics aud general outlook on life we find a radical development.

Early Buddhism may have been founded upon a purely psychological basis irrespective of theories concerning the external world, but almost insensibly there crystallized a new ontology, a new science of heaven and earth, a new explanation of the mysteries of the universe.

What had been ignored as non-essential came to be denied. What had been an analogy came to be considered an eternal reality. Once more even within the ranks of Buddhism there arose conflicting systems of thought, differing on points of psychological analysis, on cosmic conceptions, on problems of epistemology. Men realized

that an ethic based purely on experience and without reference to an ideal must fail, but they disputed among themselves as to what ideal to follow, what scheme of things to accept.

Eventually, after some centuries of arid speculation and metaphysical hair-splitting, there arose the Dhyana or *Zen* School of Mahayana Buddhism.

This school emphasized the old distinction between Absolute Truth and Relative Truth. Absolute Truth they asserted was in its essence incapable of being rendered into words. It was for ever inconceivable by the finite mind. The infinite world of reality could not be summed up in the finite world of human theories. While, however, they were Agnostic in teaching the inconceivability of the Fundamental Reality they were Gnostic in saying that it could be ever increasingly *realized* by transcending the limitations of human language and thought, and by awakening the Buddha-seed which they believed to be dormant within us all.

As we grow in wisdom and in realisation so does our body of relative truths increase and improve. Relative truth is that slight insight into the "soul of things" which we have in the past achieved. Absolute truth is always one and the same; but relative truth changes from generation to generation, from year to year. It is ever expanding, so that the small circle of relative truths approaches in size the circle of definite comprehension. They can never coincide, the latter must always contain the former, but the distance between them must constantly diminish.

In other realms of human thought we have long recognised this fact. Our knowledge of geography, of history, of science, of mathematics is not static. There can never be any final revelation with regard to them. No single book can forever be the last word on the subject. They are but streams of relative truth forever surging onwards to the ocean of absolutivity.

The Dhyana School of Mahayana Buddhism, however, is unique in applying this theory to religion. Almost all other schools of thought have looked upon their dogmas as final; their scriptures as eternal revelations of reality; their organisation as the ultimate channel of salvation. With *Zen* any religious doctrine, any sacred book must of necessity be nothing more than a mile-stone on the road of human progress; a note on the record of mental development rather than an ultimate refuge of belief.

"A scripture is no more than a finger pointing to the moon of Buddhahood. When we recognise the moon and enjoy its benign beauty the finger is of no use. . . . Away with your stone knife! Do not cut out the side of the boat from which you dropped a sword in order to mark where it sank. The boat is ever moving on. The Canon is the window through which we observe the grand scenery of human nature. To hold communion with it we must get outside of the window."

Accordingly, since Zen looks upon all books as imperfect and gradually aspiring conceptions of truth, it does not think that truth is locked up only in Buddhistic works. It uses the words of Confucius, of Sankara, of Christ, of all other great spiritual teachers.

So also with its conception of the Infinite. It has elevated the doctrine of the Universal *Dharma* or Law into a theory of an ever-present Norm, an underlying principle, a noumenon behind the world of phenomena, but to call this reality Allah, or God, or Vishnu seems to the follower of Zen to be a limitation. To assign to it definite qualities and attributes is but reading our own thoughts into it. As yet we are but touching its fringes, to claim to know it is blasphemy. Accordingly they refer to it sometimes as That One; sometimes as Buddha-nature—now as The Essence of Mind; now as The Inconceivable Reality.

Mahayana has indeed its relative truths. It has erected a vast metaphysical system, intricate and profound. The Tendai and Avatamsaka schools have devoted themselves to working out its details. It has developed the theory of the underlying reality into the definite doctrine of *Bhutatathata*, the Absolute; the stream of life into the doctrine of the *Alaya Vijnana*; the personality of the Buddha into the doctrine of the *Trikaya*. Much of this philosophy will probably be found true. Some will undoubtedly prove false. But it is conceived only as relative and never as absolute truth; as an ever-perfecting outlook on life and never as a closed system of dogma.

One final point deserves attention. Mahayana, though teaching the futility of dogmas, preaches the utility of symbols. The Supreme Reality can never be personified, but it may be symbolized, and that in many diverse ways. Now as *Amitabha Buddha* (the Buddha of Infinite Light), now as *Vairocana Buddha* (the Buddha Bright as the Sun). Its aspect of Compassion has been symbolized in art and

in poetry as *Avalokatisvara* (the Lord who Looks Down from on High); its various other aspects have received innumerable other names. Nirvana has been symbolized as the Lotus-land; and the way of Emancipation as a great bark upon the waters carrying the souls of the faithful to the golden shores of the West.

This theory of symbolization has saved Mahayana from being a cold philosophy. It has developed into a passionately devotional religion. It is the hope and the comfort of millions, their torch of learning, and the expression of their æsthetic ideals.

It has opened for thousands the gateway of illumination. It has shewn how we may outgrow each dogma and each limitation, and yet remain faithful to the ideal. It has taught that all the innumerable phenomena of life are expressions of one infinite Reality, whose essence by the purification of the mind we may gradually come to understand.

It discovers the Buddha-heart hidden within our breasts. The world which before seemed but a vale of tears is transformed. It has become the open door of Reality. In its clear light all sentient beings become pilgrims to the Goal, and ourselves but seekers after Truth.

Mr. Allan Bennett, formerly the Thera Ananda Metteyya, next addressed the meeting on *Buddhism as a Religion* :—

In every great religion we find a union, under the one style, of several widely different elements; there is the philosophy, or view taken of life as a whole; the ethic, or body of rules relating to human conduct, its moral aspect; and, of far less real importance, though it is often regarded as the main feature of the religion by those who have been born and bred under its auspices, you have the collection of outer observances, the rites and modes of worship, which form, as it were, the outer body of the religion; and which, like gross bodies in general, is found to persist in view of the world even after the religion has lost its interior essential vitality, and in real truth is dead.

Besides these, however, which we might conveniently classify as the equivalents, in a living human being, of the gross body, the vital principle, and the intellect or mind, there exists in all living religions the inner vitalising flame; what, to use a word which unfortunately carries with it certain non-Buddhist implications, but which in its

ordinary usage is the only Engiish word available, we may term the *soul* of the religion, the only thing about it which renders it alive, a real and an active entity, capable of animating, through the channel of the bodies of doctrine and of ethic, the lives of its followers ; and this, fundamentally speaking, is in the last resort what we imply when we speak of a religion in its deepest and truest sense. The *spiritual* element, the manner in which and the extent to which a given body of teaching is capable of ensouling and conveying to its followers the mighty potencies of the interior, the spiritual universe ; that is what we mean when we speak of any of the world's creeds peculiarly as a *religion* : and it is of this, the innermost and most essential feature of Buddhism that I propose to say a few, and of necessity all too-failing, words.

For it is just in this matter of a religion *as* religion that it is most difficult, is indeed all but impossible, to convey any clear and sufficient idea to an occidental audience; and that for the very simple reason that, however it might have been in the bye-gone times, which we term the "age of faith," religion, in this interior sense of the word, has all but died out of our western world. Rather, perhaps, I should say that, by reason perhaps mainly of the fact that the West has grown out of the religions formerly prevalent ; this, the deepest and most supremely important element in life has become so overlaid by other forms of mental and psychic activity as scarcely ever to appear above the surface of the mental life ; only occasionally manifesting, as it were through the thick veil of material activities, in some great act of renunciation ; like that of a Damien devoting himself to a life of untold horror and inevitable ending, so far as this world is concerned, in death. It is because this essential element of religious life has seemed to me to be only thus overlaid and not really dead, that I regard its revival as possible ; as, indeed, a work before all others of importance at this special juncture in our history ; and it is on this account that I have spent my life in the endeavour to bring home to our western world this greatest religion out of all the many which exist, still in the splendour of full vitality, out there in the East to-day.

For in the East, as ever, religion in all its aspects still exists as the most potent of the forces which move even the great masses of mankind. It still remains one of the most moving memories of my life, how landing in Ceylon as a young man, and going, that first day of my arrival in the East, to a Buddhist Temple, I first came into

contact with Buddhism as the living, heart-moving reality it is in those eastern lands. It was astonishing; well-nigh incredible to myself who experienced it, the all-but palpable power of its presence, in the very atmosphere of that little temple at Maradana; in the speech of the English-speaking Monk, whom I was so fortunate as to find installed there: a Siamese Prince, once a great personage in the worldly sense in his own country; an able diplomat, once accredited to five European Courts, and who, like no few others of royal lineage in the Orient, had found it the greatest and noblest thing in life to cast aside, as his great Master had done before him, wealth and dignity, and power, and all that makes for worldly happiness, to assume the Yellow Robe of the Bhikkhu; to beg, indeed, his daily bread from the charity of villagers; but also to find peace, peace that no earthly circumstance of pomp and grandeur can ever offer to the heart of man.

You all know what great difference, not only in mere quantity, but in quality also, there is between one's memories of solitude, of interior contact and commune with this universal life about us, of a moonless night beneath the stars, and a sun-lit day;—how the lessons that we gather from the star-lit heavens seem indeed so great and high and noble; but all so very far away; whilst the corresponding experience of lonely communing with life, with nature, in the sun-light, seems indefinitely more vivid, more immediate; partaking of the very essence, somehow, even of our daily human life. It is not only the incomparably greater volume and intensity of the sun's light, his life poured into us, but a difference of *quality* far greater still; so far away, so utterly remote in time and space that star-light seems; so wonderfully, potently present, so immediate and immanent in life itself, as is the magic presence, the light and warmth and life forth-streaming from the sun.

Multiply tenfold, nay a hundredfold, that contrast, that distinction, and you may realise a little of the difference I then found between that Buddhism of the books, read in this distant land, which still at that period had been my guide in life for some ten years; and the religion, *as* religion, of Buddhism as I found it on that ever-to-be-remembered day. Later on, indeed, I was to find that that same glory of an inner experential life existed not alone in shrine and sanctuary and monastery tenanted by holy men;—that it entered into the daily lives, the daily thoughts and common speech of all the Buddhist peoples; an ever-potent presence, as obvious for one with

eyes to see it as is the splendour of the risen sun. And, just as all the sun's bright beauties,—its warmth, its sense of prodigally outflung life,—grow ever greater and more wonderful, yet still ever in contact with our daily ways, as he rises ever yet higher above his place of dawning ; just as one feels ever his presence in the sunlight, himself, one knows, the sure and certain centre, the focal source from which all this great earth's life is ever streaming ;—just so one feels, with a surety, a sense of certitude that I despair of conveying to any who have not experienced it, the ever-real, ever-living presence, there behind this sunlight of Buddhism in its native land, of that great Figure of the Teacher, the Indian Prince who, so many centuries ago, cast aside all worldly blessings that He might find the way to peace for suffering humanity ; and, finding it at last, taught us who dimly strive to follow Him not, after He had passed away, to suppose that He no longer evermore was with, to guide us and inspire ; but rather to conceive Him as living onward through all the gathering ages, incarnate and immanent in the Truth He taught ; Himself the glorious Sun, lighting for us the way upon our path to Everlasting Peace.

The Chairman then introduced Mr. A. W. P. Jayatilaka, a young Sinhalese law-student, who spoke on *The Essence of Buddhism* as follows : —

I am asked to speak a few words on this occasion, and the subject selected is " The Essence of Buddhism."

You will at once grant that it is too wide a subject to be dealt with in the space of ten or twelve minutes. But what I intend to do is to address you on some of the main, fundamental and essential truths of Buddhism. Let us take the three great pillars on which the structure of the Teaching is built ; namely, *Anicca* (Impermanence), *Dukkha* (Sorrow or Suffering), and *Anatta* (Selflessness).

*Anicca* signifies that there is nothing that is permanent. We see this truth everywhere, around us and within ourselves. We realise it. We find everything decaying sooner or later ;—material wealth, power, happiness, comfort, glory, pride ;—all these change and pass away. We may stop to think and ask ourselves : Where is the glory of ancient Greece ? Where is the power of Imperial Rome ? Where is the pride of Germany ? They have all vanished. To-day it is England's epoch of power and predominance ; to-morrow the leadership of the world will have passed to some other race or nation.

Everything is subject to the law of decay, of change, of impermanence.

Next there is the truth of *Dukkha* (Sorrow or Suffering). It was to solve this problem that the Buddha, then Prince Siddhartha of the Sakya Race, at the age of twenty-nine left His royal home, and gave up all the prospects of a brilliant worldly career. It was on account of the suffering that He witnessed everywhere that the Bodisattva of the deepest compassion, of absolute piety and of perfect wisdom, laboured for mankind with an energy that recognised no difficulties or obstacles ; through a life of teaching that knew no comfort or rest, and with a love that held no thought of self ; courting every kind of suffering with a devotion which could only be found in the most passionate devotee in the cause of Truth ; and inspired throughout with the loftiest of ideals and the most gracious promptings of the human heart, that could only be exhibited by the sincerest of the sincere.

Twenty-five centuries ago, seated at the foot of the Bodhi-Tree at Uruvela (the modern Buddha-Gaya) He solved the problem of finding the truth He was searching for ; the Truth which He enunciated in the formula of the Four Noble Truths:—Sorrow, the Cause of Sorrow, the Cessation of Sorrow and the Path that leads to the Cessation of Sorrow. The chief of these is the Truth about Sorrow, upon which rests the whole structure of Buddhism. Now we may ask ourselves why is Buddhism based on sorrow or suffering ? and the answer is, because all life is suffering ; for in the midst of all pleasure, we suffer pain, and in the midst of life, we are on the verge of death. This is a plain and simple fact. We see it daily and no one can deny its truth. Then, again, do we not suffer at birth, in old-age, in war, and in the struggle for freedom, in disease, and in death, in our craving for objects, which we are unable to obtain, in our forced association with things which we abhor ? In a word, the elements of our very existence are based on suffering.

And it is this craving that is the cause of suffering. It is this craving that leads us in *Samsara*, The Ocean of Existence, from one birth to another. And suffering will come to an end only when this craving is extinguished. What have we to do to attain this position ? There is but one thing, and that is to follow most faithfully in every detail the Eight-Fold Noble Path, the Path which leads to the Cessation of Sorrow, the Path which reveals the Truth in the most

unmistakeable manner, the Path that gives perfect wisdom and supreme enlightenment, the Path that leads to the Everlasting Peace of Nirvana. And what is this Eight-Fold Noble Path? It is Right Understanding (*Samma Ditthi*); Right Resolve (*Samma Sankappo*); Right Speech (*Samma Vaca*); Right means of livelihood (*Samma ajivo*); Right Conduct (*Samma Kammanta*); Right Effort or Energy (*Samma Vayama*); Right Contemplation (*Samma Sati*); Right Concentration (*Samma Samadhi*).

We can see, if we examine its members in detail, that this Path consists of a three-fold discipline; a discipline in purity of thought, of speech and of action; and we are taught in our Scriptures that this Path can be reached by the practice of *Dana* (charity), *Sila* (adherence to or observance of the moral Law) and *Bhavana* (Meditation).

"We know that every action is followed by its corresponding results; we know that charity given to our fellow-beings comes back to us in some form or other; we know that charity is the best and most convenient way of earning merit; we know that the most meritorious form of charity is giving in support of the Dharma; we know that one of the perfections of the Buddha was charity; we know as well that the course of morality can be followed step by step."

Let us therefore practice charity, but we must remember "that charity given for name and fame; charity given to be repeated and talked of; charity given as a bribe expecting something in return, and charity given with display, brings to the giver no reward, but only loss, and as well be-littles such a donor in the sight of others."

Now as to *Sila*. This means the observance of the Five Precepts, adherence to the Moral Law. These Precepts are:—Do not kill (i.e., do not destroy the life of *any* sentient being); do not steal; do not commit adultery; do not lie; do not drink any intoxicating liquors, or use any intoxicating drugs. These Five Precepts have been simply and beautifully rendered by Sir Edwin Arnold in his great masterpiece, "The Light of Asia."

> "*Kill not, for pity's sake, and lest ye slay*
> *The meanest thing upon its upward way.*
>
> *Give freely, and receive, but take from none*
> *By greed or fraud or force what is his own.*

*Touch not thy neighbour's wife, neither commit*
*Sins of the flesh unlawful and unfit.*

*Bear not false witness, slander not, nor lie ;*
*—Truth is the speech of inward purity.*

*Shun drugs and drinks which work the mind abuse ;*
*—Clear minds, clean bodies, need no Soma-juice.*"

Lastly we come to *Bhavana* which means Meditation or intense inward mental concentration on certain specified objects, such as the Teachings themselves. It is only by such a course of action that we realise their inner meanings, and their hidden virtues. It is by *Bhavana* that we see the value of forgetting the harm that may have been done to us by others, the virtue of forgiving our enemies; for we lose nothing by being kind and compassionate, and we know that hatred ceases not with hatred, but by love alone. It is by meditation that we realise the importance of that spiritual liberation, founded on universal love, from the bondages of Craving, Passion and Self-delusion, which constitutes the Goal of Buddhist hopes, Nirvana ; by meditation also, seeing the fundamental one-ness of all life, we aspire to increase the happiness of every living thing.

Let us all therefore, by the practice of Charity, by adherence to the Precepts, and by Meditation, with the Buddha as our Guide, with the Dharma as our Chart, and with the Sangha as our Pilot, steer safe this ship of our existence, safe from the storms and clear of the rocks of the ocean of Samsara's Suffering ; until at last we shall reach the glorious Further Shore of Life, the everlasting Peace,—birthless and deathless Nirvana.

The proceedings then terminated with the following words from the Chairman, Mr. W. A. De Silva :—

The mission of Buddhism is not to impose a creed or a set of beliefs on any one, but rather to inculcate the principles of a religion of life, practised with clear-sighted understanding. A Buddhist does not work for the hereafter, neglecting to mind the present, but works both for immediate and future progress. The future depends, he is taught, on the immediate present. To start with, we recognise the underlying unity of all forms of life, from the lowliest organism up

to man, and yet beyond man in spheres where the physical state of a being is different to what we see around us. All beings are subject to the Law of Causation. Every action has its result. Every thought has its influence, every deed has its effect. Progress means happiness and is to be attained by cultivating one's faculties to their best advantage. We have to remember that we seek individual progress for its wider effect on general progress. Nothing is at a standstill, nothing is passive; everything is changing, and in these changes there is conflict—conflict that brings sorrow, that interrupts the harmonious sequence of life and so brings pain. There is no real Self or Ego, separate from the rest of life; all things are related to each other, and interact continually. The duty of the individual is to train himself to so pursue his path in life, that he may perfect himself as a part of the great whole; that the whole may thereby progress. Progress is arrested through selfish desire, through hatred and dislike, and through dull inactivity. And our training is directed to the overcoming of these constantly recurring obstacles. We have to be active and alert, for this purpose we seek to maintain a healthy physique, a clear mind, and a well regulated life. We have to cultivate our powers of memory, our power of observation, our powers of healthy imagination. We have to cultivate kindness, love and sympathy to all; we have to learn to make sacrifices for the sake of others.

The purpose of Buddhism is to teach how best we can realize these ideals; how best we can overcome the distractions due to our environment. It does not merely lay down rules of life or conduct; but indicates rather the training one should undergo to enable him to live a life of usefulness. Buddhism is not merely for the learned or the intellectual, but for all. It is the religion of life, the religion that does not recognise extremes, the religion that helps all alike to move forward. It is the religion of liberty, of freedom of thought and action. It is the religion of brotherhood—brotherhood not only of man, but of all living beings. It is the religion of equal opportunities to all irrespective of sex, nationality, race, environment or condition of life; and, above all, it is the religion of the Middle Path that promotes the welfare of humanity, and brings progress, love, and happiness to all beings. Buddhism has done much to ennoble the life of the East; it is capable of doing even more for the nations of the Western world.

## Review.

In 1919 L'Ersica-Milano published a volume by Giovanni Costanzi under the title of the "*Poems of Buddha.*" It is of interest that they should be the work of a young Italian, scarcely more than a boy. This would indicate that Buddhism is becoming a factor even in the thoughts of youthful Westerners. Giovanni Costanzi was born at Milano, July 11th, 1897, and lost his life fighting for his country, April 16th, 1917, near the Piave, when his flying machine fell and was burned. He was a student of Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, and well acquainted with Eastern literature. He was not only a student of Buddhism, but one who believed in its teaching and lived accordingly. To realize his own sincerity, he, like the Buddha, abandoned home-life, an act not understood in the West as it is in the East, and so doubly fraught with difficulty. All this, while he was young, beautiful, beloved, and filled with the artist's sense of the beauty of the world. Poems from the heart of such a writer would be interesting if they had no other worth than being written by him.

He has chosen for subjects three ascetics: Visvantara from the *Cariyapitaka*, Vicvamitra from the *Mahabharata*, and Syavana from the *Vana-Parvana.* He has written of the Ganges, the Himalaya Mountains, and the ocean. He has also written of women —Maya, the mother of the Buddha; Kisa Gotami, the bereaved mother who sought mustard-seed in a house unvisited by death; Pramadvara, the beloved of Kuru, who, when restored to life by the gift of half the span of his own years to the gods, beseeches him to follow her beyond mortal love into the Nothing; where alone love can be eternal. He sings of heroes and wise men and the serene Buddha Himself. In all the poems is the longing for oblivion. Through them all are pictures of nature—skies and seas and twilights and stars and good Italian olive-trees and sweet youth. The verses are arranged in three-line strophes, the first and third rhyming.

The book is decorated by the wood-cuts of Gino Carlo Sensani, a master of the technique of wood-engraving. The initiate and tail-pieces in vermilion are most charming, while the full-page "L'Amore" and "L'Eroi" are beautiful, as also is the title-page with its presentation of the Buddha.

A. B.

## Notes and News.

Quite the most noteworthy recent event in connection with Buddhism in the Western world is the appearance, in part 9 of H. G. Wells' *Outline of History*, of a remarkably clear and appreciative account of the Founder of Buddhism and His Teaching. The vivid imagination, wide general knowledge and remarkable capacity for lucid presentation of this author, combined with a fine word-mastery, have ensured him an immense body of readers for all that he may write; nor is this popularity confined to the English-speaking public only:—no writer of modern English having a greater vogue in Europe at large, where translations of all his works are extant, and eagerly read by the more thoughtful sections of the community. This appreciation, therefore, will go far towards bringing many minds, and those amongst the ablest, to the study of Buddhism; a result at which we naturally rejoice. That Wells should appreciate this Aryan Truth is not remarkable, for his is a typically Aryan mind;—Aryan, not only in its ability and genius, but also in its uncompromising desire of and search after Truth. His conception of the Attainment of Buddhahood is, naturally, purely intellectual; but Buddhists, instructed as they are to measure even spiritual teachings by the intellect, will have little disagreement with him on that point.

Two minor errors may be mentioned;—the first, that "In all his discourses he never called himself the Buddha." That is not correct, though it is true that His general mode of reference to Himself was as the *Tathagata* ("Follower in the Footsteps of his Predecessors"). The second point is that in the map Ceylon should have been double-shaded, as forming a portion of the present empire of Buddhism. It is pleasant to be reminded, in a footnote wherein the author refers to *Buddhism* and other works of Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids as the source of his knowledge of the subject, of the immense debt which we Buddhists owe to the veteran Pali scholar, whose devoted and self-sacrificing labours first rendered accessible to Western minds the incomparable treasure of the Buddha's Teaching.

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It is with the greatest regret we announce the death at his residence near Colombo, of Proctor J. E. R. Pereira, who has for long been most highly esteemed as one of the most active and devoted of the Buddhist laity of the Island. Always in the forefront of every movement and endeavour on behalf of his religion, Mr. Pereira will

perhaps be best and longest remembered as the founder of the Maitreya Hall at Maradana, near Colombo, a solidly-built and very well-appointed structure, somewhat after the style of a Christian church, which was mainly designed to meet a very pressing need of the English-speaking Buddhist community of the capital of Ceylon. The great majority of the English-speaking Buddhists in Colombo, as elsewhere, earn their livelihood in the courts and other Government offices, or in the great European stores, with the result that they are unable to attend the usual gatherings at the monasteries on the Uposatha days, the so-called "Buddhist Sabbaths," which fall on different days of the week in accordance with the lunar phases. To meet this need the Maitreya Hall was established, and there, every Sunday, when—the courts and offices being closed—the English-speaking Buddhists were at leisure, a Buddhist Monk or layman would preach to the large audience that assembled. Often these discourses were in English, and the Maitreya Hall trustees, in carrying on this noble work, met and overcame one of the principal disadvantages under which Buddhism labours; that, namely, the English-speaking Buddhists are generally unable, owing to the reason stated, to attend the ordinary preaching of the Bhikkhus. Seeing that, speaking generally, the English-speaking community is the most influential section of the Buddhist population of Ceylon and Burma, to thus place the Teaching of the Buddha again within their reach was a most valuable, as it was a far-seeing work. In addition, a Buddhist school was started in connection with the Hall, and here, again, most valuable work was done.

Personally, we have the happiest recollections of our association with Mr. Pereira; he it was who assisted the present writer to enter the Buddhist Order at Akyab, and later acted as his principal Dayaka when in Colombo. Mr. Pereira was a man of the widest sympathies and knowledge, and his demise will leave a distinct gap in the ranks of the Buddhist workers in Ceylon. We proffer, in the name of the Council and Members of this Society, our warmest sympathies with Mr. Pereira's family, themselves including several ardent workers on behalf of the Sasana.

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We have had the pleasure, lately, of meeting several eminent Buddhists here in London. Mr. W. A. De Silva, one of the most noted Buddhists in Ceylon, President of the Buddhist Temporalities and a score of other movements on behalf of the religion, visited England during the autumn and winter of last year, and, as our

readers will see, was made President of the Society by the Council. His address as Chairman at our meeting at Caxton Hall last November will be found in another place in this issue. Mr. D. B. Jayatilaka, who left us last year, is again happily with us. Burma, last year, sent over a legal Deputation in connection with the attempt of a reactionery Lieutenant-Governor to exclude that country from participation in certain reforms recently made in the government of India in general. Such exclusion, we may say, would be most improper and unjust, and we are hoping to be able to announce in our next issue that Burma, the most highly literate of all the provinces of the Indian Empire, has received its just due. The only point contacting the religion in the petition presented by the Deputation to the Secretary of State for India was an appeal against the uncouth practice, on behalf of the less-educated sort of European, of entering religious precincts, like the platform of Shwe Dagon Pagoda, with shod feet. If, even in Burma, a European enters a Mohammedan Mosque or an Indian Temple, he must remove his shoes; and it is hard to see why, as recently occurred, a Lieutenant-Governor should discriminate so markedly against the religion of the great bulk of the people of Burma, as to remove his shoes whilst visiting the Mosque and Hindu Temple, and then walk shod round Shwe Dagon. A Burman who in this country enters in his native attire a Christian church, is quite properly expected to remove his head-gear, in accordance with the custom of the country. Surely this is a case where reciprocity might be expected? To our English Readers this question of tramping in boots round holy places may seem to be a small one, and so in a sense it is; but those who have lived in the East will well understand when we say that it is not so unimportant as might appear. Two of the Members of the Deputation, Maung Pu and Maung Tun Shein, were elected members of our Council whilst here; Maung Tun Shein's interesting address on the effects of the religion on the daily life of the Burmese people will be found in the report of the meeting at Caxton Hall.

Other items of news are unavoidably held over till our next issue, owing to lack of space.

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